Zoogoer

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2007 **CALENDAR**

SEPTEMBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6	● 7	8	9
10 Grandparents' Day	11	12	13	☽ 14	15 Hispanic Heritage Month begins	16
17 **Fiesta Musical**	18	19	20	21	○ 22 Native American Day Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown	23 Autumnal equinox Navaratri
24 Ramadan begins	25	26	27	28	29	☾ 30

OCTOBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Yom Kippur begins at sundown	2	3	4	5	6 Sukkot begins at sundown	● 7
8	9 Columbus Day (observed)	10	11	12	13 **FONZ Annual Meeting**	☽ 14
15 National Rainforest Week begins	16	17	18	19	20	21 Sweetest Day Diwali
○ 22	23	24 Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan ends)	25	26	27 **Boo at the Zoo**	28 **Boo at the Zoo**
☾ 29 **Boo at the Zoo** Daylight Saving Time ends 2 a.m., set clocks back	30	31 Halloween				

NOVEMBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 American Indian Heritage Month begins	2	3	4
● 5	6	7 Election Day	8	9	10	11 Veterans' Day
☽ 12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	○ 20	21	22	23 Thanksgiving	24	25 **Kandula's Birthday**
26	27	☾ 28	29	30		

DECEMBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	● 5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8 Bodhi Day	9 Human Rights Day
10	11	☽ 12	13	14	15 Hanukkah begins at sundown	16
17	18	19	○ 20	21 Winter solstice	22	23
24 New Year's Eve Eid al-Adha	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa begins	☾ 27	28 Congress enacted Endangered Species Act, 1973	29	30
31						

☽ LAST QUARTER ○ NEW MOON ☾ FIRST QUARTER ● FULL MOON

Reminders of the **Pleistocene**

North America once was a land of giants. During the Pleistocene epoch, between 11,000 and 1.8 million years ago, gargantuan herbivores—including seven-foot-tall ground sloths, 200-pound giant beavers, and armadillo-like glyptodons that weighed more than a ton—lived here. Their predators included giant short-faced bears, saber-toothed cats, and, surprisingly, American lions and cheetahs.

Another predator invaded North America during the Pleistocene: humans. From Asia, modern humans first crossed a steppe connecting Siberia and Alaska roughly 13,000 to 15,000 years ago. It's likely they were following prey into new territory, but their days of hunting mammoths and other Pleistocene species were numbered. Less than 5,000 years after humans arrived, nearly 70 percent of the genera of North American megafauna were extinct.

Are humans to blame? Scientists debate *Homo sapiens*' role in Pleistocene extinctions. Climate change may have been the chief culprit. A cooling period around the same time as the extinctions may have altered the plant diversity so dramatically that herbivores that failed to adapt starved to death; consequently, so would the predators and scavengers that depended on them. Alternatively, the "blitzkrieg" hypothesis contends that humans hunted Pleistocene megafauna, which were likely slow to reproduce, to extinction. And it's possible that dogs, rats, and parasites that humans brought with them may have spread devastating diseases to North American animals. Perhaps a combination of some or all of these factors brought about the demise of the giants.

The end of the Pleistocene wasn't all gloom and doom in North America. Myriad species survive relatively unchanged today, including coyotes, turkey vultures, and the black-footed ferret, a weasel-like mammal that only recently faced extinction. When just 18 black-footed ferrets were known to exist in the 1980s, Smithsonian National Zoo scientists and their colleagues led breeding and reintroduction programs to restore the species to the same land it inhabited during the Pleistocene.

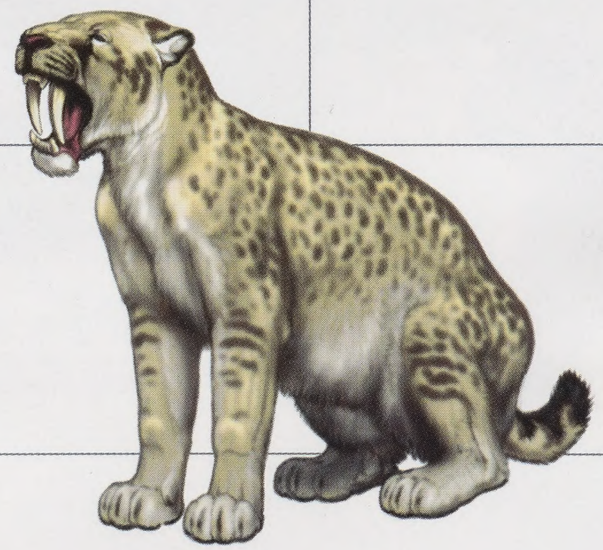
The giants and predators that did succumb to extinction continue to captivate us. Although you will never see these animals in the flesh, you can visit some of their close relatives and look-alikes at the National Zoo. The 2007 *ZooGoer* calendar features a few of the Zoo animals that are living reminders of ancient inhabitants of our continent.

Carl Buell

Giant short-faced bear, Jefferson's ground sloth, and giant beaver, from left to right.

Asia Trail features clouded leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*), which have the largest canine teeth of any living cats in proportion to body size. Another cat famed for its elongated canines is *Smilodon fatalis*, a saber-toothed species that lived in western North America during the Pleistocene.

Photos: Jessie Cohen/NZP. Illustrations: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 New Year's Day	2	● 3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	☽ 11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (observed)	16	17	18	○ 19	20 Muharram begins
21	22	23	24	☾ 25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

DECEMBER 2006

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FEBRUARY 2007

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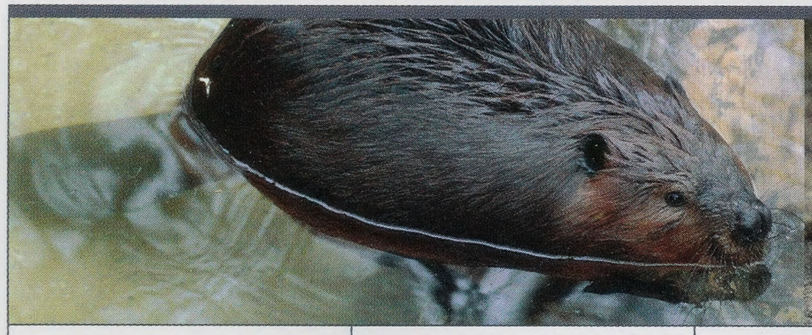
JANUARY 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

The Zoo's American beavers (*Castor canadensis*) are roughly the size of a three-year-old child. During the Pleistocene, American beavers coexisted with giant beavers (*Castoroides ohioensis*) that probably weighed about 200 pounds. Competition between the two species may have contributed to the giant beaver's demise.

Photos: top and far right, Ann Batdorf/NZP; far left, J'nie Woosley/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Black History Month begins	● 2 Groundhog Day	3
4	5	6 Registration for FONZ summer camps begins at www.fonz.org	7	8 Nirvana Day	9	☽ 10
11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16 Maha Shivaratri	○ 17
18 Chinese New Year	19 Presidents' Day	20 Mardi Gras	21 Ash Wednesday	22 Washington's Birthday	23	☾ 24
25	26	27	28			

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JANUARY 2007

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MARCH 2007

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FEBRUARY 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

Like the Small Mammal House's southern three-banded armadillo (*Tolypeutes matacus*), Pleistocene glyptodons (*Glyptotherium* spp.) had hard carapaces that protected them from predators. But the glyptodons were huge—they weighed more than a ton and were nearly as big as a car.

Photos, from top: Jessie Cohen/NZP, Ann Batdorf/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Women's History Month begins	2 National Zoological Park established, 1889	● 3 Purim begins at sundown Holi
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m., set clocks ahead	☽ 12	13	14	15	16	17 North American Wildlife Celebration St. Patrick's Day
18	○ 19	20 Vernal equinox	21	22	23	24
☾ 25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2007

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APRIL 2007

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29	30					

MARCH 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

The giant short-faced bear (*Arctodus simus*) was the largest land carnivore in North America during the Pleistocene. At 1,500 pounds, it would dwarf Asia Trail's sloth bears (*Melursus ursinus*, above) and the giant pandas (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*, below) at the Fujifilm Giant Panda Habitat.

Photos, from top: Jessie Cohen/NZP, Ann Batdorf/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 **Panda Month begins** April Fool's Day Palm Sunday	2 Passover begins at sundown	3 **Snore & Roar registration begins at www.fonz.org**	4	5	6 Good Friday	7
8 Easter	9 **African American Family Celebration**	10	11	12	13	14
15 Income tax returns due	16 FONZ founded, 1958	17	18	19	20	21
22 Earth Day	23	24	25 Administrative Professionals Day	26	27 Arbor Day	28
29	30					

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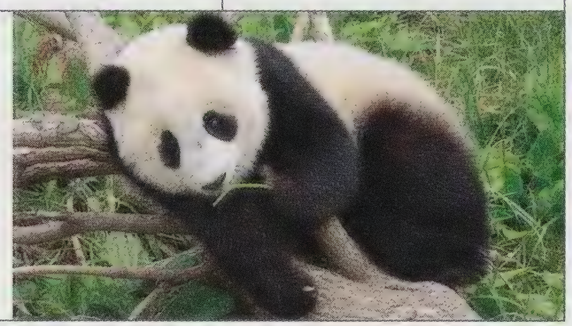
www.fujifilmusa.com



MARCH 2007

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MAY 2007

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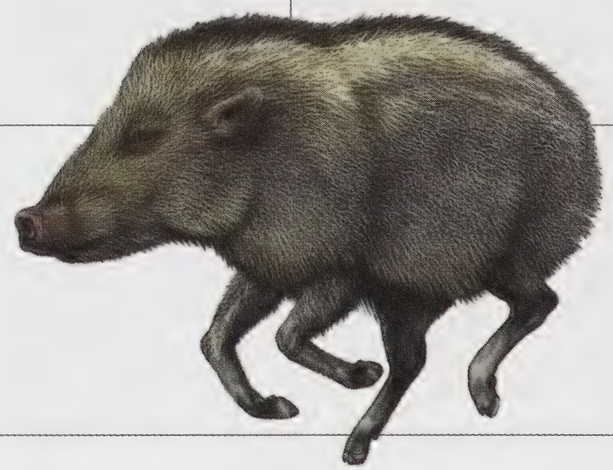
27	28	29	30	31		

APRIL 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

The Zoo's collared peccaries (*Tayassu tajacu*) are native to the U.S. Southwest, where they live in small family groups. Fossil evidence suggests the same was true of flat-headed peccaries (*Platygonus compressus*) that lived mostly in the eastern half of North America during the Pleistocene.

Photos: Jessie Cohen/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	● 2 Buddha Day	3	4	5 Cinco de Mayo
6	7	8	9	☽ 10	11 Guppy Gala	12 International Migratory Bird Day
13 Mother's Day	14	15	○ 16	17 National ZooFari	18	19 Armed Forces Day
20	21	22 Shavuot begins at sundown	☾ 23	24	25	26
27	28 Memorial Day	29	30	31		

APRIL 2007

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JUNE 2007

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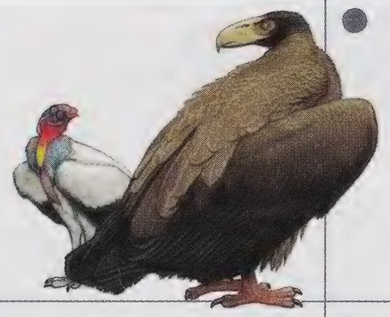
MAY 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

King vultures (*Sarcorhamphus papa*), which can be seen at the Zoo's Bird House, are scavengers. In the illustration below, a king vulture stands beside the much larger Merriam's teratorn (*Teratornis merriami*), a Pleistocene bird with a 12-foot wingspan that may have been an active predator.

Photos: Jessie Cohen/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					● 1	2
3	4	5 World Environment Day	6	7	☽ 8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Flag Day	○ 15	16 Zoo Morning
17 Father's Day	18	19	20	21 Summer solstice	☾ 22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Sunset Serenades	29	● 30

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MAY 2007

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27	28	29	30	31		

JULY 2007

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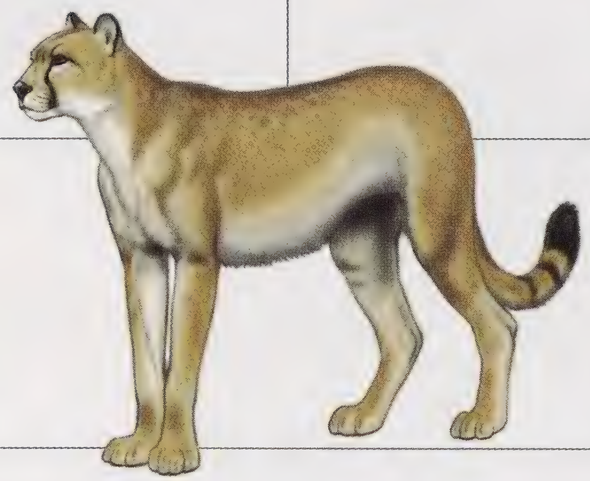
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JUNE 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

The Zoo's cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) are native to Africa, but they bear a striking resemblance to American cheetahs (*A. trumani*). Scientists disagree as to whether the two species belong to the same genus, or whether the American cheetah rightly belongs in the genus *Miracinonyx*.

Photos: Jessie Cohen/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4 Independence Day	5 Sunset Serenades	6	☽ 7
8	9 Tai Shan's birthday	10	11	12 Sunset Serenades	13	○ 14
15	16	17	18	19 Sunset Serenades	20	21
☾ 22 Mei Xiang's birthday	23	24	25	26 Sunset Serenades	27	28
29	● 30	31				

JUNE 2007

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AUGUST 2007

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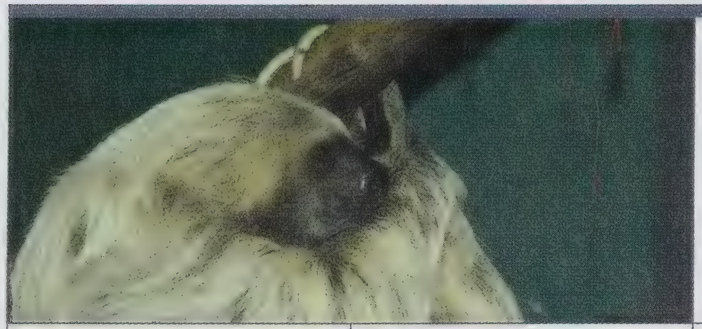
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JULY 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

Arboreal Linné's two-toed sloths (*Choloepus didactylus*) hang out in trees in the Small Mammal House and Amazonia. Their Pleistocene counterparts included terrestrial Jefferson's ground sloths (*Megalonyx jeffersoni*), which stretched seven feet tall when standing on their hind feet.

Photos, from top: Ann Batdorf/NZP, Jessie Cohen/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Coca-Cola The Coca-Cola Company is proud to support the Smithsonian's National Zoo.	1	2 Sunset Serenades	3	4
☽ 5	6	7	8	9	10	11
○ 12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	☾ 20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Tian Tian's birthday	● 28 Raksha Bandhan	29	30	31	

JULY 2007

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SEPTEMBER 2007

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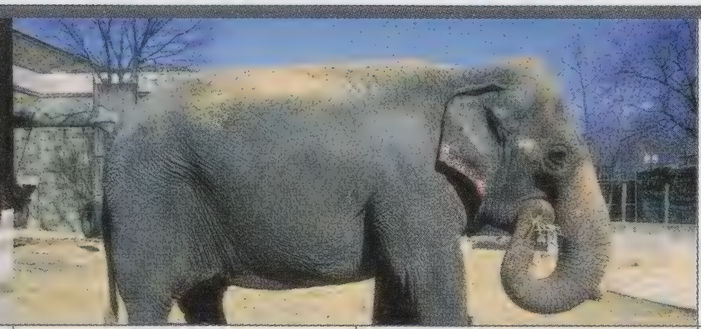
AUGUST 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

Kandula is the youngest Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) at the National Zoo. Asian elephants existed in Asia during the Pleistocene, but not in North America, the domain of American mastodons (*Mammut americanum*, top illustration) and Columbian mammoths (*Mammuthus columbi*, bottom illustration).

Photos: top and far left, Jessie Cohen/NZP; far right, Leah Overstreet/NZP. Illustrations: Carl Buell.



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY		SATURDAY
						1
2	3 Labor Day	☽ 4	5	6	7	8
9 Grandparents' Day	10	○ 11 Patriot Day	12 Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown	13 Ramadan begins	14	15 Hispanic Heritage Month begins
16 Fiesta Musical	17	18	☾ 19	20	21 Yom Kippur beings at sundown	22
23 Autumnal equinox	24	25	● 26 Sukkot begins at sundown	27	28 Native American Day	29
30						

AUGUST 2007

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OCTOBER 2007

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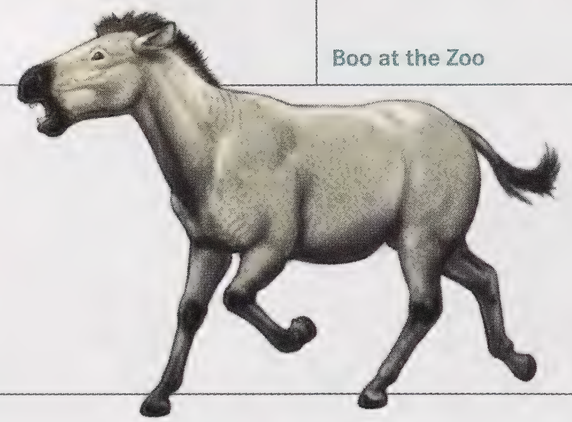
SEPTEMBER 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

By the end of the Pleistocene, western horses (*Equus occidentalis*) and several other North American horse species were extinct. Modern members of the same genus, including the Zoo's Przewalski's horses (*E. caballus przewalskii*, above) and Grevy's zebra (*E. grevyii*, below), are descendants of Eurasian species.

Photos: Top and far left, Jessie Cohen/NZP. Bottom right, Ann Batdorf/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	☽ 3	4	5	6
7	8 Columbus Day (observed)	9	10	○ 11	12 Navaratri	13 Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan ends)
14	15 National Rainforest Week begins	16	17	18	☾ 19	20 Sweetest Day
21	22	23	24	25	● 26 Boo at the Zoo	27 Boo at the Zoo
28 Boo at the Zoo	29	30	31 Halloween			

SEPTEMBER 2007

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NOVEMBER 2007

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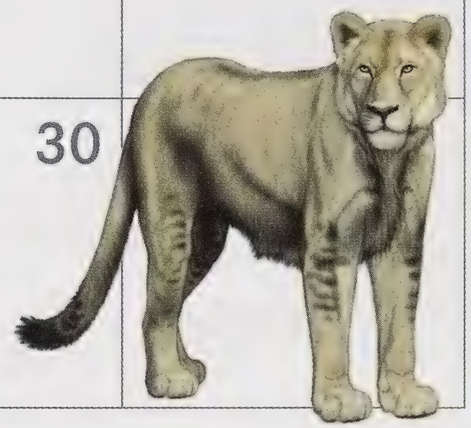
OCTOBER 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

African lions (*Panthera leo*) like the female at the Great Cats exhibit hunt in grassland savannas, and American lions (*Panthera atrox*) probably chased their prey in similar North American habitats. But it's unclear whether American lions lived in prides as their modern African relatives do.

Photos: Ann Batdorf/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			ROSENTHAL JAGUAR LAND ROVER	☽ 1 Birthday party registration begins at www.fonz.org American Indian Heritage Month begins	2	3
4 Daylight Saving Time ends 2 a.m., set clocks back	5	6 Election Day	7	8	○ 9 Diwali	10
11	12 Veterans' Day (observed)	13	14	15	16	☾ 17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving	23	● 24
25 Kandula's birthday	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER 2007

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DECEMBER 2007

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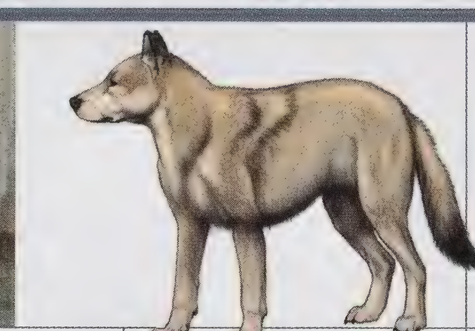
30	31					

NOVEMBER 2007

Visit our website at **www.fonz.org.**

Dire wolves (*Canis dirus*) probably hunted in large packs in southwestern North America during the Pleistocene. They had shorter, more powerful legs and larger teeth than their close relatives, the Zoo's Mexican wolves (*Canis lupus baileyi*), but were otherwise very similar.

Photos: top and far right, Ann Batdorf/NZP; far left, J'nie Woosley/NZP. Illustration: Carl Buell.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						☽ 1
2	3	4 Hanukkah begins at sundown	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8 Bodhi Day
○ 9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	☾ 17	18	19	20 Eid al-Adha	21	22 Winter solstice
23	● 24	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa begins	27	28 Congress enacted Endangered Species Act, 1973	29
30	☽ 31 New Year's Eve					

NOVEMBER 2007

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JANUARY 2008

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DECEMBER 2007

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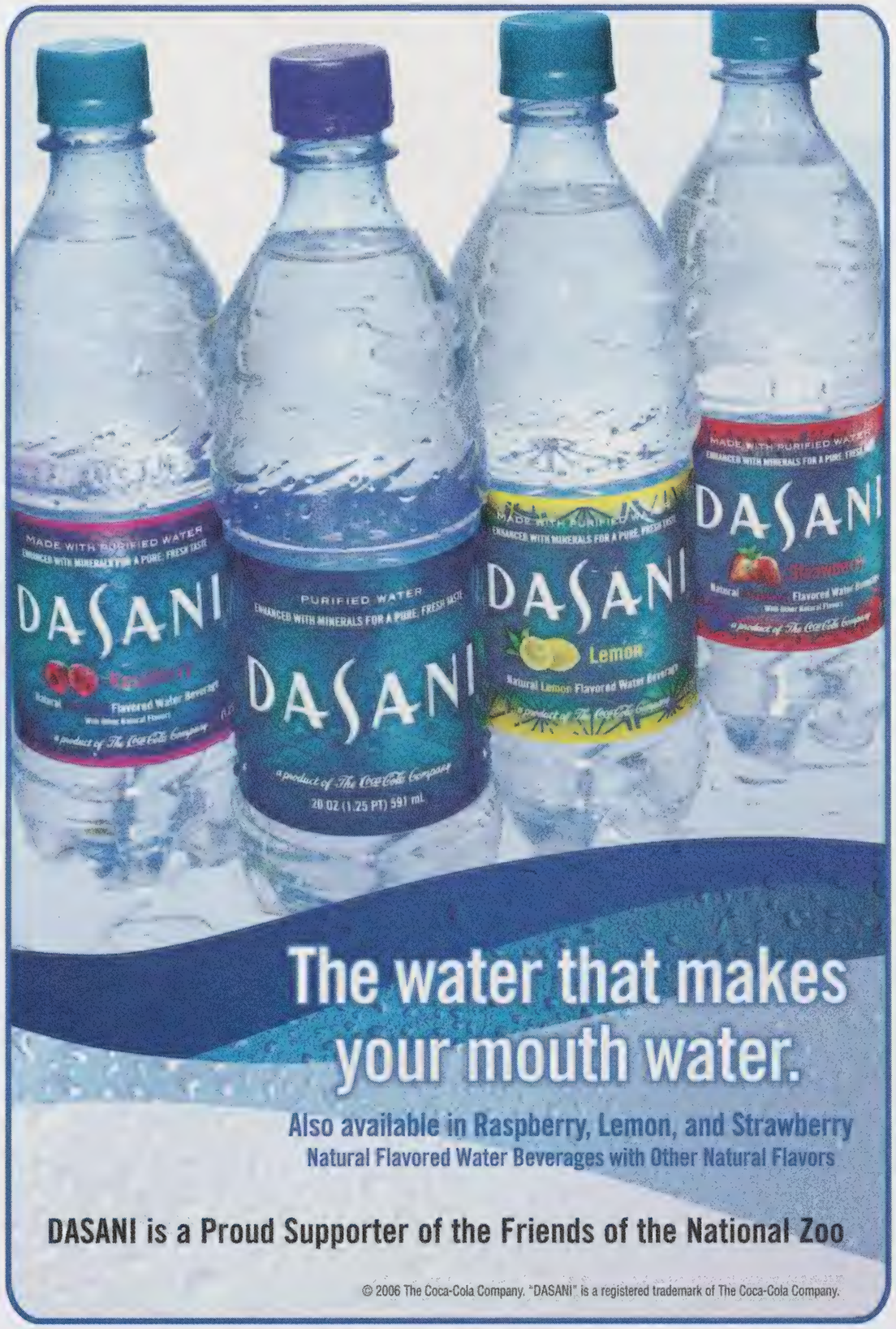

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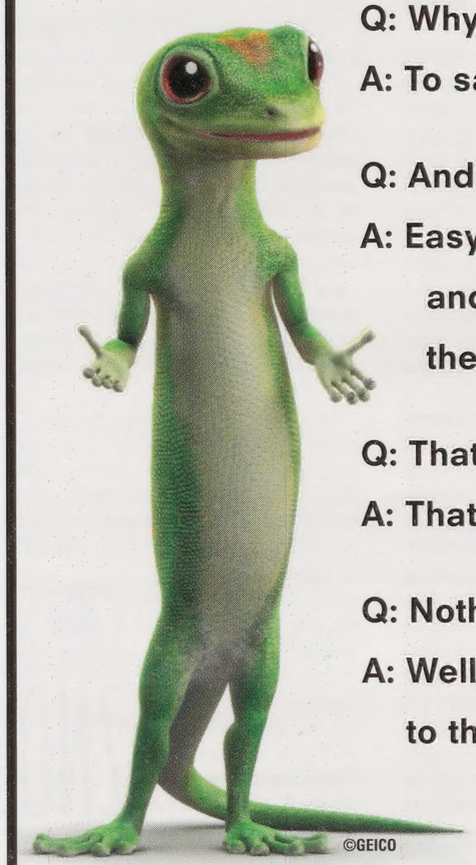
An interview with the Gecko



Q: Why are you here?

A: To save people money.

Q: And how could they do that?

A: Easy. If they go to geico.com and get a free car insurance quote, they could save hundreds.

Q: That's it?

A: That's it.

Q: Nothing else?

A: Well, do you know which way to the pandas?

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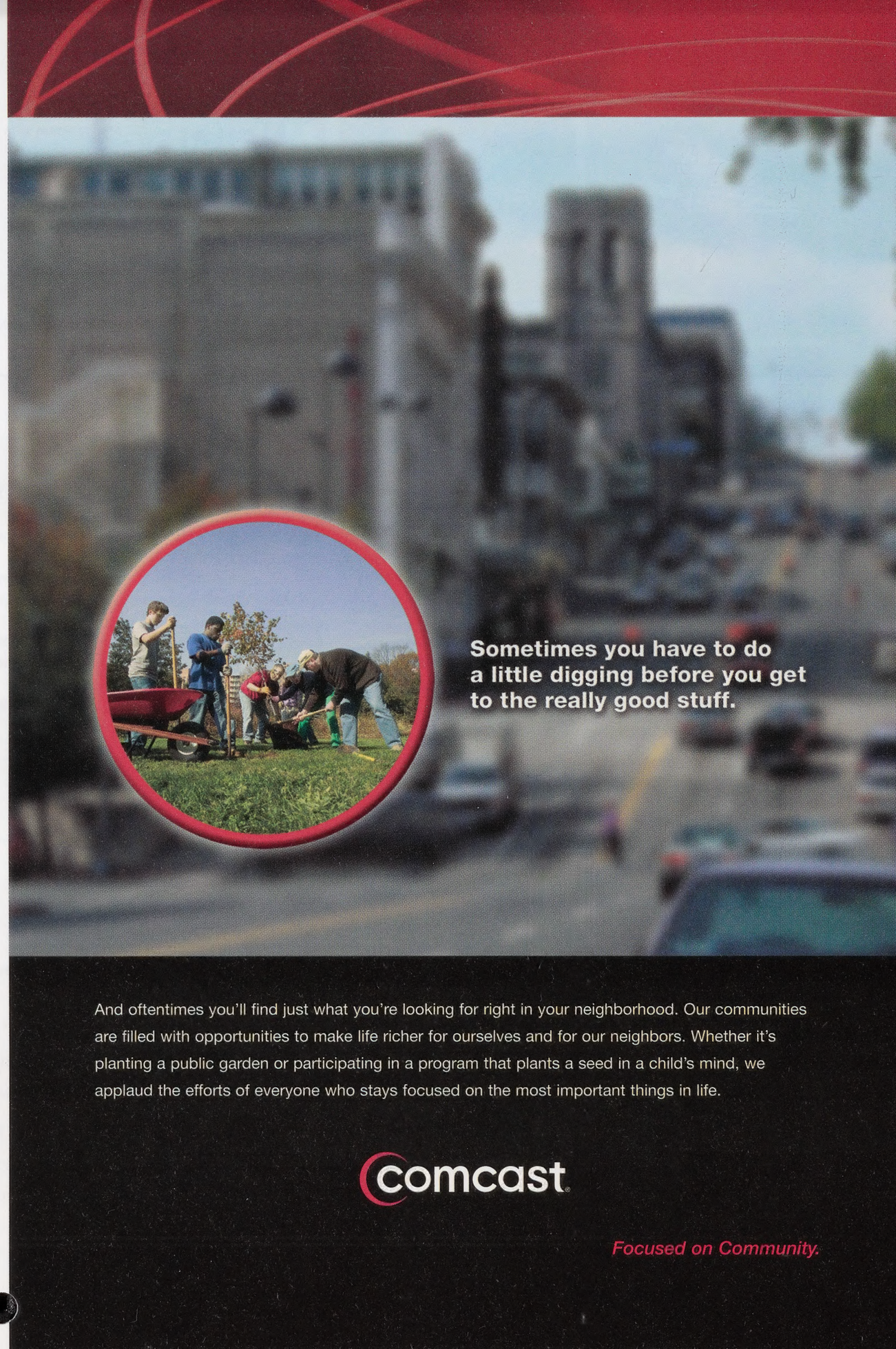

Jessie Cohen/NZP

Zoogoer

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Cover: As an adult, giant panda Tai Shan will be much smaller than the giant short-faced bear, which lived in North America during the Pleistocene. Photo by Ann Batdorf/NZP.

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2008 AT A GLANCE

JANUARY 2008

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FEBRUARY 2008

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APRIL 2008

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MAY 2008

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JULY 2008

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DECEMBER 2008

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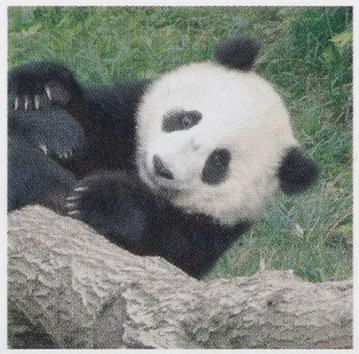

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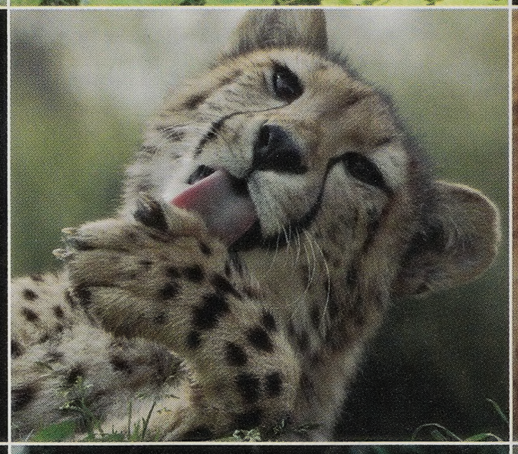

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